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ABSTRACT

The number of public high school graduates, which had been decreasing for the past 10 years, is projected to increase through 1988-89. After 1988-89, the number of public high school graduates is projected to begin decreasing once again--at least until the early 1990s. The data used in these forecasts were obtained from the Common Core of Data (CCD) survey conducted by the Center for Education Statistics. No comparable source of this type of data exists for private schools. (MLF)

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STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS

U.S. Department of Education • Office of Educational Research and Improvement

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Targeted Forecast: Public High School Graduates

This forecast of public high school graduates is part of a new series to be issued by the Center for Education Statistics (CES). The purpose is to develop 5-year projections of key education statistics and also highlight projected data for the coming school term. These forecasts are particularly targeted for individuals in business, industry, government, the media, and education whose work requires information on projected developments and trends affecting American education. Subsequent editions of "Targeted Forecasts of Public High School Graduates" will be published each April. Other targeted forecasts will be issued on earned degrees conferred, enrollments, and instructional staff.

– Emerson J. Elliott, Director
Center for Education Statistics

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Number of Public High School Graduates Projected to Increase This Year

Highlights

1986-87 Graduates––

- The Center for Education Statistics (CES) forecasts that 2 percent more students will wear caps and gowns at public high schools this year than in 1985-86. The number will increase from the estimated 2.378 million students last year to 2.415 million graduates in 1986-87. This is projected to be the first increase since 1975-76, reflecting an increase in births that began in 1968.

5-Year Outlook––

- The number of public high school graduates, which had been decreasing for the past 10 years, is projected to increase through 1988-89.
- After 1988-89, CES forecasts that the number of public high school graduates will begin decreasing once again – at least until the early 1990's.

Forecast

Public high school graduates, with forecasts: 1984-85 to 1990- 91.

	School Year	Public High School Graduates
Actual	1984-85	2,419,646
Forecast	1985-86	2,378,000
	1986-87	2,415,000
	1987-88	2,469,000
	1988-89	2,520,000
	1989-90	2,306,000
	1990-91	2,240,000

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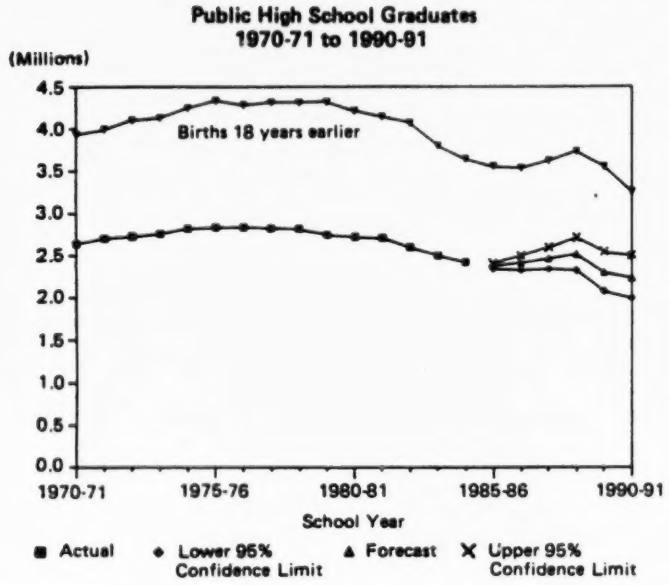

Technical Notes

Methodology--

The number of public high school graduates was forecast by using single exponential smoothing to project graduates as a percent of 12th grade enrollment. These forecasts were then multiplied by forecasts of 12th grade enrollment to produce the high school graduate projections. This method assumes that past trends in factors affecting graduation will continue for the next 5 years. Some of the factors implicitly included in the model are immigration, dropouts, transfers to and from private schools, and deaths. The number of high school graduates and the grade by grade enrollment used in these forecasts were obtained from the Common Core of Data (CCD) survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, Center for Education Statistics. No comparable source of this type of data exists for private schools, thus forecasts of private high school graduates could not be calculated.

Forecast Accuracy--

Mean absolute percent error (MAPE) was used to measure forecast accuracy. On the average, the MAPE for 1 year ahead projections of public high school graduates was 1.1, for 2 years ahead it was 2.1, and for 5 years ahead it was 4.3. An analysis of projection errors was conducted by CES in 1984. This paper is available on request.

For more information about the topics in this bulletin, contact:

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